UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/335
25 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 25 APRIL 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey to you the attached letter, dated 25 April 1997, which I have received from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations (see annex). Attached to the letter is the second bi-weekly report on the multinational protection force for Albania requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1101 (1997) of 28 March 1997.

I should appreciate your bringing the letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

Annex

Letter dated 25 April 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit the second report on the multinational protection force for Albania (see annex). The report is submitted pursuant to the requirement set out in paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 1101 (1997) of 28 March 1997, in which the Council requested the Member States participating in the multinational protection force to provide periodic reports, at least every two weeks, through the Secretary-General, to the Council. The first such report was conveyed to you on 10 April (S/1997/296, annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and the second report circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI
Ambassador

Appendix

Second report to the Security Council on the operation of the multinational protection force in Albania

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 28 March 1997, the Security Council adopted resolution 1101 (1997), in paragraph 2 of which it welcomed the offer made by certain Member States to establish a temporary and limited multinational protection force to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance.

2. In paragraph 9 of the resolution the Security Council requested the Member States participating in the multinational protection force to provide periodic reports, at least every two weeks, through the Secretary-General, to the Council. The first report was provided on 9 April 1997 (S/1997/296, annex) specifying, inter alia, the parameters and modalities of the operation on the basis of consultations between Member States participating in the force and the Government of Albania. The present second report summarizes the first week of operations in Albania and describes the progress made towards the objectives laid out in paragraph 2 of resolution 1101 (1997).

II. MULTINATIONAL PROTECTION FORCE

Political guidance

3. The Steering Committee, consisting of the Political Directors of the troop-contributing countries and the Commander of the operation, continues to follow the overall situation on the ground and the full compliance of the activities of the force with the Security Council's mandate. It meets on a weekly basis. Up to now it has held four meetings, on 4, 9, 14 and 23 April 1997.

4. The relevant international organizations participate in the Steering Committee meetings as observers, informing the Committee about their ongoing activities with respect to the Albanian crisis. In particular, the United Nations was represented by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, while representatives of both the Presidency and the Commission of the European Union (EU) were present. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Western European Union (WEU) also attended as observers, represented by their respective presidents.

Cooperation with Albanian authorities

5. On the eve of the deployment of the multinational protection force, the Defence Minister of Italy, Beniamino Andreatta, visited Tirana (12 April) and the Prime Minister of Italy, Romano Prodi, visited Vlore and Tirana (13 April). Both visits confirmed the willingness of the Government of Albania to cooperate

with the multinational protection force and with humanitarian agencies for the safe and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance.

6. The Steering Committee, through its Chairman, Ambassador Amedeo de Franchis, and the Commander of the operation, Admiral Guido Venturoni, Chief of the Italian Defence Staff, presented the mission of the force to the Government of Albania in a special meeting of the Steering Committee held at Rome on 14 April. The Government of Albania was represented by its Foreign Minister, Mr. Arjan Starova, who accepted the parameters and modalities of the mission and expressed appreciation to the troop-contributing countries. On that occasion, the Government of Albania informed the Steering Committee that a comprehensive central commission had been established at Tirana, headed by the Secretary of State to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Pavli Zeri, to serve as the interdepartmental point of coordination and contact.

Cooperation with international organizations

7. In compliance with the mandate described in resolution 1101 (1997), the humanitarian assistance programme to be implemented in the secure environment to which the force contributes is being carried out. In particular, the EU/ECHO is already delivering to the port of Durres a first shipment of cereals under secure conditions, while the EU/PHARE programme for Albania is under evaluation in Brussels. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are starting emergency programmes for Albania.

8. A training programme for police is under consideration. A WEU evaluation mission has been in Albania since 22 April, while EU will decide on its support in the light of the results of that mission.

9. Since the deployment of the force, a further visit to Tirana was paid on 11 April by the Personal Representative on Albania of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, former Austrian Chancellor, Mr. Franz Vranitzky, who, on the same day, also met in Venice with the Minister of Defence of Italy, Mr. Beniamino Andreatta, the Commander of the Force, Admiral Guido Venturoni and the Chairman of the Steering Committee, Ambassador Amedeo de Franchis. Since 22 April, Mr. Vranitsky's deputy, Ambassador Herbert Grubmayr, has been organizing the OSCE presence in Albania, also in the framework of the security measures agreed with the force.

Force deployment

10. The deployment of the forces started on 15 April, well within the scheduled planning of the operation.

11. The force is scheduled to reach an overall size of 6,000 men, a level that meets the operational requirements for the mission. Eight countries have so far pledged troops: Austria (120), Denmark (60), France (1,000), Greece (800), Italy (2,500)*, Romania (400), Spain (450) and Turkey (800).

12. Taking into account the prevailing conditions throughout the country and the fact that the force acts under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the force has been provided with rules of engagement in accordance with

its mandate to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel. These rules include self-defence, limited use of force, identification and warning before using force, proportionality in the use of force, need to prevent collateral damage, prohibition of retaliation and the right to position defence.

13. An agreement on the status of the force between the Government of Albania and the Governments of the countries contributing troops to the force was signed at Rome on 21 April. The provisions of the agreement apply to the personnel, property and assets of national elements and units of those nations participating in the operation when acting in connection with the operation or with the provision of relief to the civilian population.

Summary of operations

14. The first phase of the operation focuses on acquiring control over a limited number of key points of entry into the country in order to permit the prompt transportation and stockpiling of aid. The force deployment will be as follows: in the North, the Spanish troops; the French and Danish in Durres; Austrians, Greeks, Italians and Turks in the central area; and in the South, Italians, Greeks and Romanians.

15. On 15 April, the first French, Italian and Spanish contingents landed at the port of Durres and Tirana airport. At the same time as the deployment of the force, the delivery of humanitarian aid started. On 15 April, a first WFP shipment, consisting of 400 tons of food donated by the Government of Italy, reached the port of Durres on a Greek vessel. Further deliveries are currently on their way. On 16 April, Greek and Turkish contingents started to land. On 17 April, the personal representative on Albania of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Mr. Franz Vranitzky, met the Commander of the Force, General Luciano Forlani, in order to start close cooperation within the country. On 21 April, Greek and Italian forces moved into the port city of Vlore. As at 23 April 4,649 units of the force were reported to be in Albania (2,194 Italians, 1,050 French, 359 Spanish, 628 Greeks and 418 Turks). By 23 April, the Force Command was operational in Tirana.

III. CONCLUSIONS

16. Since the start of the operation the overall situation has been relatively quiet. The beginning of deployment of the force affected the overall security situation in Albania in a positive manner. Tensions have decreased and fewer clashes are being recorded. The local police are slowly regaining control, particularly in the central area (Durres and Tirana); some schools have reopened after several weeks of interruption; and commercial activities are resuming. However, some local incidents have been reported, with casualties among civilians. The general attitude of the population towards the force is positive. No signs of hostility have been noted.